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ABSTRACT

A survey of 3,789 teachers in 60 school districts in Ohio and Pennsylvania found, as expected, that feelings of job stress and job satisfaction are inversely related. The survey questionnaire gathered data on teachers' ages and experience, their schools' educational levels and urban or rural location, their job satisfaction, the sources, symptoms, and levels of teacher stress, and the coping mechanisms they use. When compared with a similar British study, the survey results show that the same high proportions of teachers in both countries are satisfied with their jobs. Further, more British than American teachers feel high levels of job stress, but more American teachers report experiencing at least some degree of stress than do English teachers. Stress among American teachers is highest among urban and high school teachers and those aged 31-44. Student misbehavior and overwork are the main sources of stress in American schools. Future research should examine the effects on stress of school organization, teacher training, and student attitudes. (Author/RW)

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TEACHER STRESS:

Sources, Symptoms and Job Satisfaction[1]

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INTRODUCTION

How stressful is it to be a teacher? What events, situations, and conditions cause stress in most teachers? How much do grade level, type of school, and other variables effect stress? How do teachers cope with their level of perceived stress? While a number of other equally important questions can be asked about stress and teaching, this study addresses these basic questions, with the objective of suggesting possible solutions and providing baseline data for further research. An example of such research might include the study of: What are the effects of variable levels of teacher stress on student achievement? Training could be developed/ applied to reduce primary sources of stress.

Although there have been a number of studies that examine facets of teacher stress, there is a general lack of consistency among methods, sampling techniques and, of course, results. A need for a broader based sample is evident. In previous studies, two general approaches have been taken: 1) the inventory approach and 2) the consequences approach. In the former, questions are frequently asked about events, tasks, or situations that effect teaching. These might include: How much stress do you feel from the first day of school? From being transferred? From an argument with your wife/husband? The second group looks at relationships between stress and other variables. These generally assume that stress is present and that cause and effect relationships exist in a systematic fashion between these variables.

The focus of the present study is more on understanding the nature of stress and building a data base for the future analysis of the relationship among variables. Although this study does look at sources of stress (stressors), it also attempts to provide diagnostic data for therapeutic training, direct intervention, preservice teacher preparation and other possible prescriptive

actions. In addition to providing normative data and a basis for further research efforts, the study is a partial replication of the Kyriacou and Sutcliffe study (1979: 89-96) conducted in the United Kingdom.

DEFINITION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The general public and especially educators have been bombarded with popular articles publicizing the large amount of stress in teaching, about teacher "burnout" (the result of too much or too prolonged stress), and about methods of coping with stress. It may be disconcerting for some to note that a definition of stress is generally lacking. Monat and Lazarus (1977: 1-8) are a notable exception. In Stress and Coping they note that stress is a collective term; it is generic, rather than specific. Accordingly, stress occurs when "external and/or internal demands tax or exceed the adaptive resources of the individual" (p. 2-3). They point out that stress has physiological, psychological, and social manifestations. To ignore any one of these areas seems unwise in dealing prescriptively with stress.

The research literature appears to partition stress into separate constructs. A number of studies reviewed by Keavney and Sinclair (1978: 273-290) define stress as teacher anxiety. Other studies have defined the construct of stress as either conflict, frustration, or threat.

French and Caplan (1972: 30-66) suggest that stress can be looked at as a phenomenon understandable in an organizational context. They would explain stress in terms of norms, role ambiguity, role conflict, and their effect on the individual.

In constructing a general theory of stress, agreement is even harder to achieve. Outside of education, stress is narrowly examined from a physiological framework. Respiration, blood pressure, and glandular re-

sponse are physiological variables clearly altered by stressors. (Bloch 1978: 1189-1192). Selye (1976) provides a physiologically based theoretical model called the "General Adaption Syndrome." This compares the body to a thermostat which reacts to sudden changes to maintain a homeostatic condition. There are three stages according to Selye: 1) the alarm reaction, 2) the resistance stage, and 3) exhaustion.

However, these viewpoints overlook the psychological and social effects of stress. An alternative explanation rooted in the psychological realm emanates from "needs theory." Teachers have basic needs, as do all adults; when these are not met, frustration, anxiety and threat are likely to occur; the individual feels stressed. Maslow's hierarchy is familiar to most educators. Stress occurs when a lower order need is blocked or goes unfulfilled. Safety is an obvious need. When teachers fear for their physical safety, they experience stress.

The French and Caplan chapter (1972: 30-66) provides a more sociologically oriented theory for understanding stress. When role conflict or role ambiguity occurs, one manifestation is stress. They go on to link these organizational variables with the personal needs of the individual and his/her physiological make-up. A more unified theory of stress may not be possible; it most certainly will require a more empirical basis than is currently available.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Several important studies on stress and several comprehensive reviews have been reported in the past five years. The Sparks and Hammond (1981) publication is particularly useful in linking popular articles with research

in education. The Keavney and Sinclair (1978) study is also comprehensive in reviewing earlier studies in education. Outside education, the literature is more extensive, though often focusing on physiological factors. Two recommended resources are Adams (1980) and the previously cited work by Monat and Lazarus (1977).

Sparks and Hammond (1981) pointed out that researchers have acknowledged the importance of student affective development while generally ignoring the effect of teacher emotional health on the teaching learning process. Harlin and Jerrick (1976: 55-8, 213-214) received responses from 9,000 elementary teachers, which showed that 84% felt that there were emotional health hazards in teaching. Stress producing factors identified in this study included: 1) class size, 2) lack of teaching materials, 3) discipline problems, and 4) public pressures on teachers.

One might expect stress to be common in urban environments. A 1979 Newark (New Jersey) study indicated that student behavior problems were a major producer of stress and that 41% of teachers reported their jobs were either "very or extremely" stressful. In a 1980 Detroit study (cited in Sparks and Hammond), of 263 randomly selected teachers, nearly one-half reported they had been threatened by violence while at school. Nearly one-fourth had been assaulted. Sparks and Hammond reported similar results (with a very small sample) for respondents to a NEA Opinionnaire regarding teacher satisfaction with teaching. Forty-five percent of teachers indicated that they would not go into teaching if they were to choose again.

In the 1980 NEA survey, more than one-half of the teachers reported that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching. 5.2% reported they had been physically assaulted in the past year. Nearly one-fourth reported that personal property had been stolen. In addition, the survey

indicated that 57% of teachers do not plan to stay in teaching until retirement. Evidence supporting the level of teacher fear comes from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). The agency reported that more than 50% of persons arrested for serious crimes were juveniles; that is, persons required to be in elementary and secondary schools.

In a study on job satisfaction, Cooke and Kornbluh (1980) found that teachers were more dissatisfied with their work than professionals from all other job categories.

In studying the causes of stress, Cichon and Koff (1978: 1-27) identified the five highest stress producing factors to be: 1) involuntary transfer, 2) managing disruptive children, 3) notice of unsatisfactory performance, 4) threats of personal injury, and 5) overcrowded classrooms. Also, in a study of teachers in New York state (1979) the top stressors were: 1) managing disruptive children, 2) lack of administrative support, 3) maintaining self-control when angry, 4) overcrowded classrooms, and 5) the opening week of school.

The New York study also reported that urban elementary teachers felt under the most stress. Urban teachers felt more stress than either suburban or rural teachers. Also, the 31-40 age group had the greatest perceived stress.

Our study is partially a replication of the Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1979) study of 218 teachers in sixteen schools in England. In addition to demographic information, they rated 14 sources of stress. The main dependent measure of stress was the item, "In general, how stressful do you find being a teacher?" A second item dealing with job satisfaction was, "Overall, how satisfied are you with teaching as a job?" Their results are presented in the discussion section of this report.

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe found that job satisfaction was significantly negatively correlated to the following sources of stress: 1) poor career structure, 2) individual pupils who continually misbehave, 3) inadequate salary, 4) inadequate disciplinary policy of school, 5) noisy pupils, 6) difficult classes, 7) trying to uphold/maintain standards, and 8) too much work to do. These, and other variables of interest, were incorporated into the current study.

METHOD

A questionnaire was developed to collect data on several variables including demographic factors, degree of general and job-related stress, job satisfaction, sources of stress, stress-related symptoms, and methods of coping with stress.

The structuring of the demographic items and wording of items measuring job related stress and job satisfaction parallel the survey items used by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe. A new item asking, "As an individual, how stressful do you feel your life is?" was added. It was hoped that teachers could separate stressors in teaching from other stressors.

The choice of items for the checklists on symptoms and the five categories of coping behaviors were drawn and snythesized from a variety of sources including popular articles recommending behaviors to reduce stress, research reports, and more scholarly treatment of stress from the medical and psychological literature.

Level of teaching position, type of school, respondent's age category and years of teaching experience were the demographic variables of interest. To indicate the level of their teaching position, respondents could

check either "high school," "middle-junior high," "elementary," "teacher-other," "supervisor," or "other." As an indicant of school type, the respondent could check "Urban," "suburban," or "rural." The variable, age, was trichotomized into categories of under 30 years, 31 to 44, and 45 years or over. Similarly, the variable, length of teaching experience, was trichotomized into categories of 0-4 years, 5-10 years, and over 10 years.

General stress was measured by the question "as an individual, how stressful do you feel your life is?" The possible responses of "not at all stressful," "mildly stressful," "moderately stressful," "very stressful," and "extremely stressful," were coded 1 through 5, respectively. Job-related stress was measured by the item "Do you find your job environment to be ..."; followed by the alternatives "not at all stressful," "mildly stressful," "moderately stressful," "very successful," and "extremely stressful." Again, responses were coded 1 through 5, respectively.

Job satisfaction of respondents was measured by the question "Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?"; followed by the alternatives, "very dissatisfied," "fairly dissatisfied," "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied," "fairly satisfied," and "very satisfied." These alternatives were coded 1 through 5, respectively.

Two questionnaire items were designed to measure sources of stress. First, respondents were asked to rank seven possible sources from the most to the least stress-producing. Next, respondents could indicate personal sources of stress by checking, if applicable, any or all of eight stress-producing factors. These factors were treated as dichotomous variables; coded "yes" if checked or "no" if not checked.

Symptoms of stress were measured by having respondents check any or all of twelve characteristics symptomatic of stress. Again, these charac-

teristics were treated as dichotomous variables, coded "yes" if checked or "no" if not checked.

Five questionnaire items were designed to determine how respondents cope with stress. The questions corresponded to five categories of coping with stress; physical, mental, destructive, direct, and psychological. For each category of coping, the respondent was presented with several descriptors of coping practices and instructed to check those that were applicable. These descriptors were treated as dichotomous variables; coded "yes" if selected and "no" if not selected.

THE SAMPLE

The questionnaire was distributed to 270 schools in sixty school districts in northeastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. The size of the schools ranged from 119 teachers and 2,577 students to three teachers with sixty pupils. Of the 7,063 questionnaires that were distributed, 3,789 were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 53.6 percent.

Questionnaires were distributed to school districts in five counties with the help of county or intermediate unit administrators. A district superintendent or building principal could decide to have teachers not participate. Each teacher participated voluntarily as well. Directions were included with each building packet of surveys to encourage a uniform procedure of administration and to provide anonymity to each respondent. One follow-up letter was sent to building principals. A letter of thanks was sent to principals who returned completed surveys. Although the responses of 3,789 subjects were available for the data analysis, the number of cases was somewhat smaller because of table-wise deletion of missing values.

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and number of respondents, by demographic variables, for the degree of general stress, job-related stress, and job satisfaction, are presented in Table 1.

Job-related stress. The means of the responses for the total sample, and all sub-groups to the question measuring job-related stress appear in Table 1. Of the total sample, 16.5% responded that their job environment was either "very stressful or "extremely stressful." The percent of high school, middle school, and elementary school teachers that reported their job environments to be either very or extremely stressful were 19.4%, 16.0%, and 13.7%, respectively. By type of school, 19.4% urban, 16.4% suburban, and 13.9% of the respondents in rural schools reported their job environment to be either very stressful or extremely stressful. By age, 13.4% of the respondents under 30, 17.7% of those 31-44, and 16.6% of the respondents 45 or older reported that their job environment was either very stressful or extremely stressful. By years of teaching experience, the percent of the respondents indicating that their job environment was either very stressful or extremely stressful was 12.7% for those with 0-4 years, 15.2% for those 5-10 years, and 18.2% for respondents with over 10 years of experience. Job-related stress is highest for respondents in high school, in urban schools, between the ages of 31 and 44, and with over 10 years of service. Respondents reporting the lowest degree of job-related stress were those in elementary schools, in rural schools, under 30 years of age, and with 0-4 years of service.

General stress. The means of responses for the total sample and all sub-groups for the question asking subjects to indicate the stressfulness of their lives appear in Table 1. 16.9% of the total sample responded that

TABLE 1

Means ($\bar{X}$), Standard Deviations (SD), and Number of Respondents (N) for General Stress, Job-Related Stress, and Job Satisfaction by Level of Position Type of School, Age, Years of Teaching, and Total

	STRESS						Job Satisfaction		
	Job			General					
	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Level of Position									
High School	1258	2.80	.88	1257	2.78	.85	1254	3.49	1.15
Middle School	718	2.64	.88	718	2.72	.86	717	3.57	1.12
Elementary School	1365	2.61	.88	1368	2.76	.84	1366	3.84	1.11
Teacher - Other	251	2.72	.88	252	2.70	.81	252	3.79	1.18
Supervisor	32	3.28	.81	33	3.15	.93	32	3.65	1.18
Other	139	2.57	.87	138	2.65	.78	139	3.82	1.10
Type of School									
Urban	1082	2.78	.93	1082	2.79	.87	1080	3.60	1.18
Suburban	1434	2.67	.87	1434	2.75	.84	1435	3.67	1.15
Rural	1136	2.65	.84	1139	2.74	.81	1136	3.70	1.09
Age									
under 30	893	2.64	.87	896	2.63	.79	891	3.74	1.08
31-44	1797	2.73	.88	1796	2.83	.85	1799	3.57	1.15
45 and over	1046	2.67	.89	1048	2.75	.86	1043	3.75	1.17
Years Teaching									
0-4	525	2.61	.88	527	2.58	.79	525	3.82	1.13
5-10	1150	2.68	.86	1153	2.77	.82	1150	3.69	1.07
over 10	2085	2.72	.90	2083	2.79	.87	2082	3.62	1.18
TOTAL	3769	2.69	.88	3772	2.76	.84	3766	3.67	1.14

their lives were either "very stressful" or "extremely stressful." A further analysis of the data revealed that 17.8% of the respondents in high schools, 15.6% in middle schools, and 17.4% in elementary schools indicated that their lives were either very stressful or extremely stressful. Analysis by type of school indicated that 18.0% in urban schools, 17.1% in suburban, and 15.6% of the respondents in rural schools reported their lives were either very or extremely stressful. By age, 12.2% of those under 30, 19.2% of those 31-44, and 17.2% of those 45 or older indicated that their lives were either very stressful or extremely stressful. Analysis by years of teaching experience revealed that 10.4% with 0-4 years, 16.3% with 5-10 years of service, and 18.8% of those with over 10 years of service indicated that their lives were either very stressful or extremely stressful. Respondents that reported the highest degree of stress in their lives, or general stress, were those in high schools, in urban schools, in the age range of 31-44, and with over 10 years of service. Respondents reporting the lowest degree of general stress were those in middle schools, in rural schools, under 30 years old, and with 0-4 years of service.

Job satisfaction. The means of responses to the question "Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?" appear in Table 1. Further analysis revealed that 69.5% of the total sample reported that they were either "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their jobs. In addition, 63.5% of the respondents in high schools, 65.8% in middle schools, and 76.6% in elementary schools reported that they were either fairly or very satisfied with their jobs. Analysis by type of school revealed 66.8% urban, 70% suburban, and 71.3% of the respondents in rural schools reported that they were either fairly satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. Analysis

by age indicated that 72.5% of those under 30, 66.9% between 31 and 44, and 71.7% of those 45 years old or over reported they were either fairly or very satisfied with their jobs. By years of experience, 74.6% with 0-4 years of service, 71.6% with 5-10, and 67.1% of those with over 10 years of service indicated they were either fairly satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. Respondents reporting the highest degree of job satisfaction were those in elementary schools, in rural schools, either under 30 or over 45 years old, and with 0-4 years of service. Respondents reporting the lowest job satisfaction were those in high school, urban schools, in the age range of 31-44, and with 10+ years of service.

Sources of stress. Respondents were asked to rank seven factors that were most likely to put them under stress. An analysis of data, by percent ranked first, indicated that "students" (30.9%) ranked as the number one source of stress; followed by "myself" (20.6%), "supervisors" (15.7%), "parents of students" (9.3%), "my family" (7.8%), "colleagues" (4.7%) and "other" (4.5%). Another questionnaire item designed to determine sources of stress presented the respondents with eight possible sources of stress and requested them to "check all choices that apply personally." Frequencies, percent, and rank of 3,789 respondents for eight sources of stress are presented in Table 2. "Individual pupils who continually misbehave" was the most frequently reported source of stress, while "little chance for advancement" was the least frequently reported source of stress.

Symptoms of stress. An item on the questionnaire enabled respondents to report symptoms of stress by checking any or all of twelve possible stress symptoms. Frequencies, percent, and rank of reported symptoms of stress for 3,789 respondents appear in Table 3. An inspection of the table reveals that "snappiness to friends-family" was the most frequently reported symptom

TABLE 2

Frequencies, Percent, and Rank for Sources of Stress

RANK	SOURCES	FREQUENCY (Percent)	
		Yes	No
1	individual pupils who continually misbehave	2164 (57.1%)	1625 (42.9%)
2	too much work	1981 (52.3%)	1808 (47.7%)
3	trying to uphold/maintain values and standards	1830 (48.3%)	1959 (51.7%)
4	noisy pupils	1735 (45.8%)	2054 (54.2%)
5	difficult class	1321 (34.9%)	2468 (65.1%)
6	inadequate salary	1148 (30.3%)	2641 (69.7%)
7	inadequate disciplinary policy of school	988 (26.1%)	2801 (73.9%)
8	little chance for advancement	712 (18.8%)	3077 (81.2%)

TABLE 3

Rank, Frequency, and Percent of Responses for Symptoms of Stress

RANK	SYMPTOMS	FREQUENCY (Percent)	
		Yes	No
1	snappiness to friends-family	2246 (59.3%)	1542 (40.7%)
2	general uneasiness	2187 (57.7%)	1602 (42.3%)
3	depressed feelings	1978 (52.2%)	1811 (47.8%)
4	being very tired	1721 (45.4%)	2068 (54.6%)
5	headache	1545 (40.8%)	2244 (59.2%)
6	knot in stomach	1080 (28.5%)	2709 (71.5%)
7	insomnia	764 (20.2%)	3025 (79.8%)
8	change in eating habits	622 (16.4%)	3167 (83.6%)
9	tightness in chest	467 (12.3%)	3322 (87.7%)
10	sweating	459 (12.1%)	3329 (87.9%)
11	sleeping a lot	450 (11.9%)	3339 (88.1%)
12	breaking out in rash or hives	263 (6.9%)	3526 (93.1%)

of stress, while "breaking out in rash or hives" was the least frequently reported symptom of stress.

Coping with stress. Five items on the questionnaire were designed to gather data on how respondents cope with stress. They could indicate type of physical, mental, destructive, direct, and psychological coping that they practiced when under stress. Frequencies, percent, and rank for coping practices, by coping strategy, are presented in Table 4. An inspection of the table reveals that for the strategy of physical coping, the most frequently reported coping practice was "meditation," while the least frequently reported coping practice was "tennis." Within the category of mental coping, the most frequently reported practice was "reading," while the least frequently reported practice was "going to school." For the strategy of destructive coping, the most frequently reported practice was "eat excessively," while the least frequently reported practice was "stay home from work." An investigation of the strategies for direct coping indicated that the most frequently reported practice was "talk with a friend," while the least frequently reported practice was "rehearse coping behaviors." For the category of psychological coping the most frequently reported practice was "think about how you could have responded differently," while the least frequently reported practice was "find someone to blame for the situation."

DISCUSSION

These results suggest a relatively small portion, 16.5% of respondents found their job environment to be either very or extremely stressful. A similar study, with a sample of British school teachers, indicated that

TABLE 4

Rank, Frequency and Percent of Responses for Coping Practices, by Coping Strategy

COPING STRATEGIES/PRACTICE	RANK	FREQUENCIES (Percent)	
		Yes	No
Physical coping			
meditation	1	1315 (34.7%)	2474 (65.3%)
exercising	2	1234 (32.6%)	2555 (67.4%)
brisk walks	3	1178 (31.1%)	2611 (68.9%)
other rigorous activities	4	1063 (28.1%)	2726 (71.9%)
jogging	5	471 (12.4%)	3318 (87.6%)
dancing	6	362 (9.6%)	3427 (90.4%)
swimming	7	303 (8.0%)	3486 (92.0%)
racquetball	8	250 (6.6%)	3539 (93.4%)
tennis	9	236 (6.2%)	3553 (93.8%)
Mental coping			
read	1	2221 (58.6%)	1568 (41.4%)
watch T.V.	2	2183 (57.6%)	1606 (42.4%)
friends outside of teaching	3	2105 (55.6%)	1684 (44.4%)
crafts	4	1155 (30.5%)	2634 (69.5%)
gardening	5	818 (21.6%)	2971 (78.4%)
playing instrument, painting	6	610 (16.1%)	3179 (83.9%)
puzzles, games, writing	7	600 (15.8%)	3189 (84.2%)
social club	8	544 (14.4%)	3245 (85.6%)
go to movies	9	435 (11.5%)	3354 (88.5%)
going to school	10	245 (6.5%)	3544 (93.5%)
Destructive coping			
eat excessively	1	1157 (30.5%)	2632 (69.5%)
rant and rave at family	2	1049 (27.7%)	2740 (72.3%)
smoke	3	634 (17.0%)	3146 (83.0%)
drink	4	490 (12.9%)	3299 (87.1%)
stay home from work	5	223 (5.9%)	3566 (94.1%)
Direct coping			
talk with a friend	1	2760 (72.8%)	1029 (27.2%)
think about alternatives	2	2364 (62.4%)	1425 (37.6%)
seek supervisor's advice	3	754 (19.9%)	3035 (80.1%)
use sick day to relax	4	609 (16.1%)	3180 (83.9%)
test new behaviors	5	458 (12.1%)	3331 (87.9%)
get feedback on coping responses	6	299 (7.9%)	3490 (92.1%)
rehearse coping behaviors	7	150 (4.0%)	3639 (96.0%)

Table 4 (continued)

COPING STRATEGIES/PRACTICE	RANK	FREQUENCIES (Percent)	
		Yes	No
Psychological coping			
think about how you could have responded differently	1	2417 (63.8%)	1372 (36.2%)
look ahead to when it will be over	2	1827 (48.2%)	1950 (51.5%)
think about how things could always be worse	3	1731 (45.7%)	2058 (54.3%)
keep going over and over it in your mind	4	1621 (42.8%)	2168 (57.2%)
prayer	5	1445 (38.1%)	2343 (61.8%)
make jokes about it	6	936 (24.7%)	2853 (75.3%)
keep it to myself	7	776 (20.5%)	3011 (79.5%)
avoid thinking about the situation	8	601 (15.9%)	3188 (84.1%)
find someone to blame for the situation	9	211 (5.6%)	3578 (94.4%)

23.4% of the respondents found their job environment to be either very stressful or extremely stressful (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe: 91). However, the mean of the responses on the item measuring job stress of the current study was 2.69, noticeably higher than the mean of 1.84 on a similar item reported in the British survey. The differences between the means may be due to the shape of the two response distributions. The skewness of the current study was positive, .34; the skewness of the responses of British teachers was negligible, .09.

When inspecting group means, the degree of job-related stress appears to conform to anticipated patterns. For example, high school teachers reported more job stress than middle school or elementary school teachers. Also, as expected, respondents in urban schools reported more job-related stress than those in suburban or rural schools. Similarly, those with over 10 years of teaching experience reported more job-related stress than those with fewer years of service. An interesting exception to these anticipated patterns of levels of job stress appears in the data related to age. Respondents in the age range 31-44 reported higher levels of job-related stress than either those under 30 or 45 years and older. (These data do not replicate the results of the study by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe.) However, the New York study also showed the 31-40 age group as having more stress than other age categories. Additional research is needed to determine why this age group appears to have the highest degree of job stress.

Although only a relatively small portion of teachers reported that their jobs were either very or extremely stressful, the data suggested that the major causes of job-related stress were student misbehavior and too much work. Also, frequently reported symptoms of stress were snappiness, general uneasiness, and depressed feelings. One could speculate that the symptoms

of snappiness, uneasiness, and depression may, in turn, influence teacher-pupil relationships in such a way to cause pupil misbehavior and, therefore, increase teacher stress. In other words, these factors may be causes as well as results of job-related stress.

The data indicate that a relatively large portion of the respondents, 69.5%, reported they were either fairly satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. The mean of responses to the question measuring job satisfaction was 3.67; a mean of 3.73 was reported in the study by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe. These results are quite similar.

An inspection of means suggests the level of reported job satisfaction conformed to anticipated patterns for the various sub-groups. For example, elementary school teachers reported a higher level of job satisfaction than middle school or high school teachers. Respondents in rural schools reported a higher degree of job satisfaction than those in urban and suburban schools. Also, respondents with fewer years of service reported a higher level of job satisfaction than those with more years of teaching experience. However, when respondents were categorized by age, the data revealed that those between the ages of 31 and 44 reported lower job satisfaction than those respondents under 30 or 45 years and older. Again, research is needed to determine why this age category teacher reports the lowest level of job satisfaction.

There are both differences and similarities between sources of stress reported in this study and sources rated highly in other studies. Clearly teachers in this study rate students and particularly student misbehavior as the most likely source of perceived stress. In the Chicago study, however, involuntary transfer is listed as the greatest stressor. One explanation for this is based on methodological differences. The Chicago study used

the "inventory approach." It is speculated that teachers' responses were based on projection, i.e. how much stress would I be under if "I were involuntarily transferred." It is also true that this item does not appear on either the current study or the English study. This issue of projected stress versus actual perceived stress appears as a substantive question and one that requires further investigation. The inventory approach seems to be open to teacher projection in responding.

The literature on stress suggests that a high stress event of short duration may be of considerably less import than a moderate stressor that endures over an extended period of time. A teacher may say the first day of school is very stressful, for example. But it only lasts one day. A study hall, on the other hand, might be rated as a moderately low source of stress, yet because it endures over the school year be debilitating over time. There is need to determine if an event rated as a high stressor endures or not, and how this effects perceived stress.

The attempt to partition out school-job stress from stress generally does not appear to have succeeded. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (: 89) discuss their belief that a single item measure of job satisfaction was preferable to more self-report items; this may generalize to self-reports on stress as well. Because the means between general stress and job stress are so nearly identical, we conclude that these teachers, at least, cannot distinguish the differences using these items. Teachers may have a Gestalt about their own stress. Thus they may view themselves as being moderately stressful, without having clearly defined understandings of how that perception is formed.

This conclusion is supported by the data from one of the source items. Teachers report "stress from within myself" as the second ranked stressor

in that list. They recognize a source without maintaining the separate identity of the source in evaluating the total stress in their individual or work lives.

SUMMARY

The level of perceived stress for teachers in this study was not unusually high. For the 3,789 teachers the percentage reporting their job as very or extremely stressful was lower than an English sample of teachers and for some teachers reported in other U.S. studies. The mean value for perceived stress was higher than the English sample, however, indicating that while fewer may be experiencing extremely stressful work situations, few are also experiencing little or no stress in teaching. As predicted, there was a negative relationship between amount of job stress and degree of job satisfaction. Teachers in the study do, by a considerable majority, derive satisfaction from teaching. As noted, urban teachers report greater stress than their suburban and rural counterparts. High school and 31-44 year old teachers are under more stress than others.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Although nearly 4,000 teachers from over 200 schools participated in the study, generalization to all situations is not warranted. Several small and mid-size cities are included in the sample; however, data from teachers in a large urban city, the size of Detroit, Boston, St. Louis, are missing. While we do not predict significantly different results, it may be that the unique problems of the central city lead to an environment of greater stress. We anticipate adding such data to the present study in the near future.

FURTHER RESEARCH AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Several questions were raised in the discussion section; these have important research implications. Several other research areas are of special interest.

1. What are the organizational and interpersonal characteristics of high and low stress schools? Or, what variables account for differences in stress levels in school organizations?

We would like to examine the effects of school climate, leadership, team teaching, etc. on levels of stress.

2. What is the effect of in-service and preservice training on the level of stress of teachers?

Thousands of dollars are being spent in schools today for workshops touted to reduce teacher stress. Do they work? How well?

3. Should stress be recognized as a work hazard? What should be the effect of a stressful environment on teacher pay, assignment, etc.?

If we know that teachers aged 31-44 experience greater stress than others, should they be assigned to schools identified as producing high stress?

4. How well do reports of teacher stress correlate with other measures of stress? Do self-reports coincide with physiological symptoms, for example? How does absenteeism, retention, and evaluation of job performance correlate with stress level?

5. What are the relationships between student achievement, classroom climate, student satisfaction, etc. and teacher stress levels?

When these five areas are addressed, both with carefully designed and conducted research studies and with dialogue over educational policy, then it should be possible to prescribe methods to cope with and reduce sources

of stress in schools. At this time, and without this research and dialogue, we predict that levels of stress in teaching will not be reduced.

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